



SERVANT LEADERSHIP: THE DECIDING DIFFERENCE

Lesson 3 - Five Key Styles of Leadership

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Transcript

[TEXT: Young African Leaders Initiative Online Training Series]

[TEXT: Mandela Washington Fellowship Institute Course]

[TEXT: Servant Leadership: The Deciding Difference]

I'm Sandra Edmonds Crewe and this is our third lesson on Servant Leadership: The Deciding Difference.

I hope the exercise at the end of the second lesson helped you to better recognize the qualities of servant leadership.

Now, let's examine the 10 principles of servant leadership as articulated by Robert Greenleaf. They are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community.

Listening is a critical communication tool, necessary for accurate communication and for actively demonstrating respect for others. Listening creates for oneself and others the experience of being heard and understood. Leaders are valued for their communication and decision making skills. She or he seeks to listen receptively to what is both being said and not said. Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's own inner voice and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit and mind are communicating.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. The servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others, recognizing the fundamental human need to be accepted.

One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for healing oneself and others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is a part of being human, servant leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to "help make whole" those whom they come in contact with.

Servant leaders must have awareness of others and themselves. They must want to be attentive to their surroundings, their actions and the effect of their behavior on others. They must solicit and be open to feedback. Making a commitment to foster awareness, particularly self-awareness, can





be scary – you never know what you may discover. But awareness aids one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. Without awareness, “we miss leadership opportunities,” according to Greenleaf.

The effective servant leader builds group consensus through “gentle but clear and persistent persuasion, and does not exert group compliance through power.” Servant leadership utilizes personal, rather than position power, to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives. This particular principle offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant leadership.

The servant-leader must stretch his or her thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking. The principle of conceptualization means the servant leader can conceive solutions to problems that do not currently exist. Servant leaders seek to nurture their abilities to “dream great dreams.” They are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day focused approach.

The next principle we’ll review is foresight. For Greenleaf, this means learning from the past in order to have a better than average guess about what is going to happen in the future. Closely related to conceptualization, foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present. Foresight allows leaders to respond to historical trauma and avoid the pitfall of an a historical response.

The eighth principle is stewardship. Organizational stewards, or “trustees,” are concerned not only for the individual followers within the organization, but are servants to the organization as a whole. They are concerned about the organization’s impact on and relationship with all of society. Stewardship is linked to organizational survival and growth.

Commitment to growth of people is another principle of servant leadership. It is the demonstrated appreciation and encouragement of others. Per Greenleaf, “The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be.” Commitment to growth insures succession planning.

From individuals to communities, the final principle honors the connection we all share in building community. Building community requires shared vision and is an excellent venue for servant leadership.

In summary, the 10 principles embrace relationship building, future-oriented actions and a commitment to community.

Now I’d like you to take the list of leaders you created at the end of the second lesson and rate them on each principle of servant leadership. Use a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least like a servant-leader and 5 being the most. As you rate the leaders, note why you gave each the score that you did. Be as specific as possible.





In Lesson 4, we'll take a look at the advantages of servant leadership and some of the criticism leveled against it.

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